

## Chapter 861

“Okay, remind me again before we go.” After a short pause, I glanced at him. “Ashton, can I ask you a question?”

He raised a brow. “What is it?”

“I’ve always thought that you’re angry with your grandpa because he broke you and Rebecca up, but I realized that wasn’t true. Can you tell me why you were so mad at your grandpa?” Some incidents of the past were etched in my memory. I remembered he hadn’t shown up during his grandfather’s funeral.

His gaze darkened a little at my question. After staring at me in silence for a while, he said, “It’s been so long. I don’t really remember why I was so mad at that time.”

Baffled by his answer, I was tongue-tied, so I stopped questioning him.

The following day.

Ashton and I went to Fuller Corporation together. The number of reporters waiting downstairs had reduced significantly. They must have left because of the lack of newsworthy information over the past few days.

Sasha’s parents were not around as well. I reckoned that they were taking care of their granddaughter at the hospital.

The lobby that used to be clamorous was now back to normal.

The moment I stepped through the entrance, Stella skipped to my side and spoke while looking at me. “Mrs. Fuller, you’re here. Isn’t it great that Sasha’s grandparents stopped coming over? You’re amazing!”

Overcome with excitement and joy, she completely overlooked the man beside me. For a moment, I thought she was about to twirl around me in delight while holding my arm.

After a while, Stella finally spotted Ashton. She hurriedly let go of me and greeted him respectfully, “I’m sorry, Mr. Fuller. So sorry.”

Glancing at her indifferently, Ashton reached out to hold my hand. Without a word, he brought me into an elevator.

In the elevator, Ashton gave me a sideways glance. “Now I know you have a way with both men and women.”

His comment befuddled me. My cheeks flushed red when I finally wrapped my head around his words. “Cut the nonsense. I worked with her yesterday while dealing with Sasha’s parents. What are you thinking?”

He chuckled and pulled me into a hug. “That my wife is very sociable.”

I rolled my eyes at him. “Stop teasing me!”

Later in the evening, I thought of Summer after preparing dinner, so I called Cameron. The phone rang for quite a while before it was picked up. “Hello, this is the Moore Residence.” Zachary’s voice sounded on the other side of the phone.

The landline phone didn’t display the caller ID, so he spoke rather formally. I froze for a second. “Dad, it’s me, Scarlett.”

The man remained silent for a short while before asking gently, “Letty, have you eaten? Are you coming home tonight?”

I chuckled. “I’ve just finished cooking. I’m staying at Ashton’s tonight. Have you guys had your dinner? How’s Summer today?”

“Mmm. She’s fine, and her fever’s gone. I guess she’ll recover soon. Your mom and aunt are cooking dinner in the kitchen now. We’re going to eat soon. Is Fuller Corporation alright?”

I nodded and chatted a little longer with him before ending the call.

Just as I was about to have my dinner, my phone rang with a call from Armond. Picking it up, I greeted him. “Hello, Mr. Murphy.” I habitually addressed him the way I did at work.

I heard a sigh from the other side. “You can call me by my name when we’re not at work. I heard from Nora that you’re in K City. Are you free to have lunch with me tomorrow?”

His words reminded me of the promise I made to him in Epea, which I put off up till now. Without a second thought, I agreed, “Sure. Let me know the time and the venue. I’m free tomorrow.”

He hummed without saying a word.

After hanging up the phone, Ashton’s dark eyes were fixed on me. “Was that Armond?”

I nodded. “When I was in Epea, I promised that I would give him the sandalwood box my grandma gave me once we returned to our country safely. Perhaps he’s interested in that box.”

Ashton’s forehead creased slightly. He kept quiet for a second before asking, “Haven’t you thought about why your grandma has the sandalwood box?”

I nodded. “I’ve thought about it, but I can’t figure it out.”

With his intense gaze still fixed on me, he said, “The way you met Armond seems deliberate to me. Scarlett, it does no harm to stay alert, no matter what you do.”

I was perplexed, yet his words made sense to me, so I nodded my head in agreement and hummed several times.

He dropped the subject afterward.

Alba Street.

Heirloom Cafe.

Following the address Armond gave me, I arrived at the restaurant, and a waiter guided me to the table where Armond was. It was already late autumn in K City. He was dressed in a casual Korean-style outfit. His hair was neat and chic. A beige trench coat was draped over the back of the chair next to him. His look made him look as dashing as a Korean idol.

The restaurant was equipped with air heaters, so I removed my jacket and put it aside. "Have you been in K City for a few days already?" I asked, looking at him.

He nodded with a half-smile. "I wanted to ask you out a few days ago, but there's a lot going on in Fuller Corporation, I thought you might be busy, so I postponed it."

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I smiled at him. The scandal about Fuller Corporation had spread like wildfire in K City. Many people in the industry heard about it, so I'm not surprised that he knew it too.

He waved at the waiters and asked them to serve the dishes. As we chatted away, all the dishes were served. The man looked at me and said, "It seems like the Lavelian Village project can't be completed anytime soon. Are you going to stay here or return to A City after this?"

I shrugged. "I haven't thought about it. I'll see how things go after I go back during the holiday." Thinking of Nora, I glanced at him while asking, "I thought you would bring Nora along this time. "

He smiled without answering me. "Did you bring the box here?"

"Of course I did, but there's something I need to ask you first." I had been pondering it for so long, yet I just couldn't get to the bottom of it.

"Go ahead." He nodded.

"The box that you put up for auction back in J City... was that your grandpa's?"

The man nodded his head in response.

Pausing briefly, I questioned, “Did someone give him the box? Can you help me ask him whether he knows someone named Winona?”

My questions wiped the smile off his face. In a split second, his expression fell, giving off a hint of indescribable coldness. The temperature around me seemed to have dropped. I couldn’t help rubbing my arms.

With my eyes on him, I asked cautiously, “What’s wrong?”

A few seconds later, his expression turned solemn as he looked at me and said, “Is Winona your grandma?”

I nodded. The scene of him standing in front of my Grandma’s tombstone in the cemetery in J City crossed my mind. “Armond, I’ve always felt that you’re getting close to me on purpose.”

Unexpectedly, instead of making up excuses, he stared at me and nodded. “Yeah, before we met in the cemetery, I saw you in K City before, but you didn’t notice me.”

I was dumbstruck. Not wanting to talk further about the past, I steered the conversation back to my grandma. “So Mr. Murphy and you know my grandma. Am I right?”

Nodding his head, he gave me a faint smile. "Yes. On top of that, they're quite close to one another."

I furrowed my brows slightly, waiting for him to go on, but the man seemed to have no intention of telling me more about it. "Give me the box," he said.

I took the box out and handed it to him. Despite my desire to ask him more about my grandma, I bit my tongue since he remained tight-lipped.

I was bewildered by his reaction. It seemed I didn't know Armond as much as I thought I did. Most of the time, he was an approachable and amicable man. Even though he was from a wealthy family, he was nothing like the other rich kids. He had pitched in to help us with many things as if he was part of our family.

However, there were times when I felt he was distant and out of our reach. The man had too many secrets which we could never understand.

Staring down at the box in his hands, he examined it once and found that it was fine. With a brow raised, he glanced at me. "I don't know much about your Grandma. I only want this box out of curiosity. Does Ashton know that you've given me the box?"

Nodding my head, I replied, "He knows."



His brows knitted together. The man seemed puzzled as he said, "Didn't he say anything?"

I shook my head while staring at him. "Why? Is there anything wrong?"

He simply shrugged and said nothing.

After lunch, I had nothing else to do, so I drove home straight away. As soon as I reached home, Ashton called me. His voice was deep and restrained. "Are you home?"

I nodded while glancing at my watch. It was already in the afternoon, so he was about to get off from work.

"Are you coming home?"

"Yeah, I'll be home in a while. Why? Do you miss me?" As usual, his voice was music to my ears. My cheeks heated instinctively.

"What do you want to eat tonight? I'll cook for you," I said.

After giving it some thought, he answered, "How about eating you tonight?"

Oh God, this man...

Later, I received another call. The person on the other end of the phone lashed out at me the moment I picked up the phone. Utterly baffled, I hesitated for a moment before asking tentatively, “Are you Sasha’s mother?”

The woman hummed in response a few times. Her voice sounded like she was on the verge of crying.

I paused for a few seconds. “Mrs. Brooks, like I’ve told you before, I’ll help you as much as I can. The police have yet to release the report. Let’s wait for it before we do anything else, alright?”

“What on earth are you talking about? The police have already given me the autopsy report much earlier. Just say it if you’re reluctant to help. Are you delaying it on purpose? Once Sasha’s cremated, we’ll have no evidence, and you’ll insist that she had committed suicide, won’t you?” The woman was a little agitated. Her tone was full of bitterness and distrust.

My brows snapped together at her accusation. I had yet to receive any update about Sasha’s autopsy report. Pulling myself together, I said, “Mrs. Brooks, I really haven’t seen the report. Let me find out about it before we discuss anything further. Is that okay?”

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Sasha's mother fell silent for a while. "Okay."

Ending the call. I felt strained. Sometimes, it wasn't necessarily a good thing to be soft-hearted. Letting out a sigh, I dialed Joseph's number. The call got through in no time.

"Hello, Mrs. Fuller," Joseph greeted me politely as always.

I went straight to the point. "Mr. Campbell, has Sasha's autopsy report been released?"

"Yes, the report is ready. The police concluded it as a suicide case."

I hummed in response. "Is there any solid evidence?"

"Yes, the metal railing at the spot where she fell was broken by Sasha herself. She visited a psychiatrist and had been diagnosed as mentally ill. Perhaps the woman had been contemplating suicide for a long time, but she did nothing because she couldn't let go of her daughter and parents."

I frowned. "Why did she decide to commit suicide all of a sudden then?"

Joseph heaved a sigh. "She bought an accidental death insurance, which took effect last month. If she was determined to have died by accident, her parents and daughter would have been the beneficiaries. With the amount of compensation from our company, her family will live a comfortable life. At least, they won't need to work hard to make ends meet."

So in short, Sasha planned everything before she jumped off the building.

However, she never thought that the police would carry out such a thorough investigation of the incident.

No wonder her mother called me out of the blue to ask for my help. I bet she already knew about it before calling me.

I nodded and hung up the phone. Right away, I called Sasha's mother back. I could tell from her tone that she was anxious. Unable to discuss the matter over the phone, I told her that I would talk to her at the hospital tomorrow.

At night, Ashton came home.

At the dining table, I served him keenly and put a little of every dish onto his plate.

Putting down his fork and spoon, the man scrutinized me with narrowed eyes. "Tell me. Is there something you want to talk about?"

Feeling a twinge of guilt, I plastered on a smile while gazing at him. "No, nothing. Do eat more. You're quite busy with work recently..."

Under his steady gaze, my voice trailed off. Breathing a sigh, I said, "Fine, I want to talk to you about Sasha's case."

He raised a brow at me. "Sure, go ahead."

"Sasha's daughter has been diagnosed with leukemia and I want to help her," I said while gazing at him with guilt.

He nodded in acknowledgment. "What are you going to do?"

I hesitated briefly before answering him. "Sasha's autopsy report is out. It's concluded that she committed suicide. According to the company policy, how much compensation is her family going to get?"

His brows furrowed slightly. “The company will compensate her out of humanitarian considerations. In fact, the company doesn’t need to take any responsibility for her case. As a result, the compensation won’t be much.”

His answer was within my expectation. After all, Sasha committed suicide. Her death was not an accident, so the company had every right to not compensate her, but...

Seeing right through my thoughts, Ashton remained silent for a short while. “Fuller Corporation has a foundation where you can apply for a sum of money for the child. But Scarlett, you’d better think it through. Make sure that the one you’re trying to help won’t get you into trouble.”

I couldn’t quite get what he was trying to say, but the moment I heard about the foundation, I breathed a sigh of relief. “I got it. I’ll handle it carefully.”

It felt like a weight off my chest to hear that there was a solution for Sasha’s daughter.

On the next day, I headed to the hospital.

Perhaps it was because of the chemotherapy, the already haggard-looking child looked even frailer now. Most of her hair had dropped, and she appeared ashen-faced and sickly.

The second Sasha’s mother saw me, she held my hand eagerly. “Mrs. Fuller, you’re finally here. The doctor said that we need another five

hundred thousand for Renee's chemotherapy, but Sasha's compensation is only two hundred thousand, and we're unable to scrape up the remaining three hundred thousand. Mrs. Fuller, I beg of you, please help us!"

I couldn't bear to see her plead this way, yet I couldn't let the matter go. "Mrs. Brooks, please don't do this. I'm trying to find ways to pay for the medical fees. Don't worry," I consoled her.

She nodded repeatedly at my words as tears kept rolling down her cheeks.

Just then, the child on the bed woke up and saw us. In a weak voice, she asked, "Grandma, I want some water..."

"Okay, okay," Sasha's mother answered. She then walked over to the water dispenser only to find that there was no water in it. Taking the empty blue container, the woman headed to the bathroom. The sound of water flowing could be heard shortly after.

"Ms. Stovall, did you come to visit me?" The child's voice echoed in the ward and broke me out of my reverie. Turning to look at the child, I was nonplussed for a second before nodding my head with a warm smile.

"Yes."

The little girl grinned, revealing her two cute snaggleteeth. "Will you visit me again?"

I nodded in response. “Yes, I will. Take good care of yourself. I’ll come over when I’m free.”

Beaming with joy, she asked, “Can you bring me sweets the next time you visit me? Grandma says that I can only eat sweets when I’m sick, but she hasn’t given me any even though I’ve been sick for a long time. I’m really craving some sweets now.”

## **Chapter 864**

While she was talking, Sasha’s mother moved the bucket out with some difficulty. I walked over to help her and asked in an uncertain tone, “Do you drink this water?”

She nodded and replied, “It’s actually not that different from tap water. Once you boil it, it is safe to drink. A bucket of water outside costs me eight, so I can buy more meat for Renee with that money.”

The words came out of her mouth very naturally, as if that was how things were supposed to be. I was taken aback for a moment, feeling a little sorry



for them. Not knowing what else to say, I helped her carry the bucket onto the water dispenser and briefly explained what she needed to give us to apply for the fund. Subsequently, I left the hospital.

However, instead of going home, I went to the mall to get some clothes and supplies for children's use, then headed back to the hospital. However, I did not see Sasha's mother. As soon as I entered Renee's room, I could see she was up. She looked at me happily and said, "Ms. Stovall, you're here."

I nodded, then helped her put on the thick socks that I had just bought. "Where's your grandma? Where did she go?"

The child thought for a while before she replied, "Uncle Shane came over just now and wanted to take Grandma's money, so she ran to the police station, probably to let them arrest him."

I frowned upon hearing her words. Previously, Joseph had said that Sasha had a brother who was addicted to gambling. He had probably come to ask for some of Sasha's compensation money. Clearly, the only thing that mattered was gambling in his eyes. The family was already in such a terrible situation, yet he still came to demand money.

Noticing a phone number on the water dispenser, I made a call to the company. Soon, someone delivered some water over. Since Renee

probably had to stay in the hospital for quite a long time, I bought a few more coupons of mineral water for the water dispenser and handed them to her. "When there's no more water in the dispenser, get Grandma to call the company to deliver more. You'll only need to give them this coupon, okay?"

She nodded. Although she was young, she understood my words.

I chatted with her a little longer until she fell asleep. Then, I headed for Moore Residence since Summer was on vacation recently, so she was probably hanging around with Emery. As Ashton constantly pampered her with many new clothes and toys, there were many items that Summer typically got bored of after only a short period of time.

Previously, I had always gotten someone to pack them up and send them over to the orphanage. However, I planned to go back and pack some up to give to Renee today.

When I arrived at Moore Residence, Cameron and Summer were swimming in the hot spring pool in the yard. Summer played with a duck toy while dressed in a pink swimsuit. On the other hand, Cameron was making a call, seemingly to get someone over to give her a spa treatment.

Noticing that Emery was nowhere in sight, I turned to the maid beside me and asked, "Where's Emery?"

“Ms. Moore and Mr. Zane took Xavier to J City because his grandmother wanted to see her grandson. Since it’s the holidays, they’re staying for a few more days!”

I had almost forgotten that on the second day after I returned from A City, Hunter told Emery that he had already booked tickets to J City. I had not thought much of it then and only recalled it now.

“Help me go pack up some of Summer’s clothes, shoes, and toys that she doesn’t normally wear or use. I’ll take them with me later!”

The maid was puzzled. “Are you sending it to the orphanage?”

I shook my head. “No. My friend’s daughter is around the same age as Summer, so I thought that since Summer doesn’t really wear many of her clothes, it’d be a waste to leave them around. I’ll be going over to visit her later, so I’ll bring some with me then.”

The maid nodded in reply.

Just then, Summer noticed my presence and came out of the pool, wrapping herself in a bath towel. She said, “Mommy, have you been busy lately? You’ve not been coming to see me. Granny says that you have a lot of work. Is that true?”

I nodded and smiled. “Yeah, Mommy’s been busy lately, but I’ve been missing you. Look, I took time off to see you, didn’t I?” As I spoke, I dried her wet hair with a towel.

Just then, Cameron came over with a towel wrapped around her as well. “How has Fuller Corporation been? Did anything happen?”

I shook my head. “No, it’s fine!”

She nodded and replied, “Since you rarely come here and there are swimsuits in the house, why don’t you go take a dip in the pool? The hot water helps to improve blood circulation and is good for the body. Ashton said that your body is always cold regardless of the season, so I think you should soak in the hot springs more often. Also, I’ve called someone to give me a spa treatment later. I think you should join me.”

I shook my head and replied, “I’ve something on later, I...”

“Don’t reject me. Your body is what’s most important. I heard that Ashton recently purchased a house in the northern part of the city. That area’s full of natural hot springs, so he probably did that to let you take more baths in the spring water there. I asked a doctor some time ago, and he said that as long as you take good care of your body, you can still get pregnant. I know this has always been a hurdle for you, but we have to look forward, my dear. We have to face our lives with hope, don’t you agree?”

Unable to refute any of her words, I could only nod in reply. By then, the maid had already brought over a swimsuit for me.

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I then changed into the swimsuit and got into the hot spring. The forty-plus-degree temperature was perfect for me and I felt so much for relaxed after soaking for a while.

Perhaps Summer had been swimming a lot recently, for she easily jumped into the pool and swam over to me frog-style. As the pool was shallow, she leaned on me and hung around me as we chatted.

Cameron had gotten someone to bring over some pastries. Soon, the spa therapists had also arrived. Since Moore Residence was huge and Cameron loved beauty, she had designed a room specifically for beauty and spa related activities. I entered and lay on the bed, enjoying the relaxing feeling coming from every part of my body. Soon, I fell asleep.

When I next woke up, the spa therapist had already left. Cameron then came in with a glass of carrot juice. "Are you awake?"

I nodded and got up to change my clothes. After the treatment, my body was feeling very relaxed and comfortable.

She laughed lightly and said, "Drink something first. We're going to have dinner soon. We are lucky Summer is here to accompany us for a few days while you guys are busy. Otherwise, we would've been really bored."

When I went to the living room, Ashton was already there. Since he was playing chess with Zachary, I left them alone and headed for the kitchen instead. When Cameron saw me, she said, "Go rest in the living room for a while. Dinner will be ready soon!"

I nodded and yawned. "When did Ashton arrive?"

"He's been here for almost an hour," she replied. Then, she suddenly remembered something and asked, "By the way, are you guys planning to go to Moranta?"

I nodded. "One of Old Mr. Fuller's comrades seemed to be there, so we're going over to visit him!"

Cameron hummed in reply and said, "You guys hadn't been able to rest properly even after coming home from work these few days. It's about time you guys took a good rest. Your body can't handle it if you just run around all the time!"

I nodded and smiled as I understood where she was coming from. Then, I took the plate of freshly steamed crabs from her and headed to the dining room.

Ashton and Zachary were having a chat when I entered.

Zachary said, "Archie is almost ninety. I'm afraid this trip may be the last time you'll ever get to see him."

Ashton nodded slightly and replied, "Life and death are determined by fate. Mr. Taylor would die as a good man."

I took a seat beside Ashton, then looked at Zachary and asked, "Dad, you know Old Mr. Fuller's comrade too?"

He smiled faintly. "It's already been so many years, and they are all heroes, so of course I know them."

That's true. I nodded in reply.

Zachary looked at me and paused before he said, "Mr. Fuller said that you gave the sandalwood box your Grandma left you to that Murphy kid?"

I nodded but could not help but look at Ashton. Why did he tell Dad about it?

Ashton shrugged and said with a slight smile, "Don't overthink it. The Murphys had been searching for the box for a long time. If they managed to find it, people were bound to find out about the news anyway."

Stunned, I stared at Zachary and asked, "Dad, is that box important to the Murphys?"

He nodded in reply and looked at me as he sighed slightly. "The box isn't only important to the Murphys. It's important to everyone. When your Grandma gave you that box, she probably didn't expect them to be able to find it. Never mind, it's fate after all."

Looking at how serious he was being, I was confused and turned to Ashton. However, it seemed as though he had no intention to say anything. Before I could continue my question, Cameron's voice rang out.

"Dinner's ready, let's eat!"

The conversation then stopped there.

After the meal, I had originally planned to stay over in Moore Residence. However, as Ashton and I were going to Moranta the next day, we had to return to the villa to pack our belongings.

Thus, we did not stay over.

As Zachary and Cameron walked us to the car when it was time to leave, Zachary looked at Ashton and suddenly said something baffling. "Moranta's different from our country. You have to pay attention to safety! Contact me immediately if there's a need!"

Ashton nodded and replied, "I'll protect Scarlett well."



Zachary simply nodded and kept silent after that.

I could not help but look at Ashton as we drove off. I asked, "Why does it feel like our trip to Moranta this time will be dangerous? What's going on?"

He smiled as his gaze fell on me. "Didn't you say that Abe came to our country? Do you really think that he won't do anything at all even when he's given such a good opportunity?"

I was taken aback. As I had been in K City recently, I had almost forgotten about that dangerous man. I replied, "He doesn't have a radar, so how would he know where we are?"

He laughed and changed the topic. "How are things going with Sasha's family?"

When he said that, I suddenly remembered that I had packed quite a bit of Summer's things for Renee. Thus, I gave Cameron a call, asking her to get someone to send it over the next day.

Ashton let out a small sigh as he looked at me. "My wife's so kind. I don't actually know if that's a good or bad thing!"

I pursed my lips, not wanting to play along with him.

After flying for several hours, Ashton and I finally reached the airport in Moranta. We were both exhausted.

## **Chapter 866**

As soon as we reached the hotel, I washed up and just fell asleep on the huge bed.

When I woke up, it was already night. Realizing that Ashton was not with me, I gave him a call whilst lying in bed. As soon as he picked up, he asked, "Are you awake?"

I nodded. "Where are you?"

"In a casino!" he said, "I'll go pick you later and bring you over to take a look!"

I was dazed for a few moments before it registered in my mind that he had said "casino." Taken aback, I asked, "Why did you suddenly go to a casino?"

"I was just taking a walk. Go get ready, I'll head back now!"

After he hung up, I sat up for a while and gathered myself together before I went to wash up. He came back just as I finished changing my clothes. He wore a casual black suit. and it showcased the coolness and vigor of a young man compared to his usual mature style. Even though Ashton never look old, wearing this new style made him look haughtier and domineering instead.

I could not help but compliment him. "I won't be surprised if your picture makes tomorrow's fashion headlines."

He smirked, which only served to make him look more charming. "I'll take it as praise from my wife."

Since he was dressed so nicely, I could not wear anything too plain. I changed into a black spaghetti strap dress and put on a pair of heels, giving off a gothic vibe. When he noticed my exposed back and shoulders, Ashton became a little unhappy and forcibly added a coat to my outfit.

I did not resist, since the overall look was not bad anyway.

As it was my first time going to a casino, my entire body was tense. The image that I had in my mind was a casino from the eighties, filled with smoke and thugs fighting. It just felt as if it was a place where groups of outlaws fought over money and desire.

When he noticed my nervousness, Ashton hugged me and said, "Don't be so anxious. People are constantly going in and out so not many of them will pay attention to you. Just take it like you're going to a bar."

I nodded but was still a little nervous. As soon as we entered the casino, I realized that it was totally different from what I imagined. The decorations were posh and elegant, and although there was still some smoke in the air, it did not affect the elegance of the place.

There were many long gambling tables in the large open space, each holding some chips that I could not accurately name. A sexy lady stood beside every table, acting as the dealer. There were also several poker tables. However, as I was clueless about gambling, I merely glanced at everything before I followed Ashton to the second floor.

The second floor was all private rooms, and attendants dressed in white and black soon escorted us into one. A poker table stood in the middle, surrounded by leather sofas all around the room. There were two people gambling at the table.

When Ashton entered the room, the young man sitting on the sofa stood up and walked over. Smiling, he said, "Mr. Fuller, I finally get to meet you."

After a round of simple introductions, I learned that the man's name was Holden, he was Archie's grandson, and he was the owner of the casino. Due to his unique style and behavior, the public had varied opinions about him.

Holden leaned on the sofa as he conversed with Ashton for a while. Then, he looked at me and said with a hint of cynicism, "Mrs. Fuller is really a true beauty She's more beautiful than most women. Do you bring her with you everywhere, Mr. Fuller?"

Ashton smiled slightly as he kept his expression gentle. He said, "I'm getting old. If she stays with me, I'm more at ease."

Why does that sound like he's flirting with me?

Holden laughed. "Such blatant flirting lines. Since you're already here, Mrs. Fuller, why don't you try out my table worth two hundred million for yourself!"

I looked at Ashton pleadingly, asking for his help. I did not know how to play poker or any other card game as I had never touched any of them since young.

Ashton pursed his lips as he pulled me over to the expensive table and pressed on something. Then, a few more cards appeared on the table, and six captivating women walked in, each carrying a pile of red chips on a tray.

Holden looked at me and raised an eyebrow. "What should we play, Mrs. Fuller?"

I turned to Ashton helplessly, but before he could speak, Holden said, "Mrs. Fuller, if you just keep sticking to your husband like that, he won't be able to do anything else. You won't be able to maintain your rich wife status for long then."

From his words, I could guess that Ashton had come to the casino for a purpose. I could also tell that because of my presence, Ashton could not do what he had to.

I pressed my lips together and looked at Ashton, then said, "If you're busy, go ahead. I'll stay here for a while!"

He gave me a small smile then looked at Holden. "Let her play the simplest game." Then, he turned to me and said, "Just play however you want. I don't have much, except for money."

## **Chapter 867**

"Damn!" Holden almost swore. "Are you showing off your wealth?"

He then raised his hand and placed three cards face down on the table, then looked at Ashton. "Go. I'll take care of your wife. I promise to protect her well!"

Ashton smiled slightly and kissed me on the cheek before he said, "Go ahead and play. I'll be back soon."

I nodded. Although I was tempted to ask him what he was busy with, I stopped myself. When Ashton left, Holden looked at me and smiled. "You'd better not cry. I don't know how to coax women. He said he'd be back, so he definitely will. You can stay here and play with peace of mind."

I raised my eyebrows slightly and said in a solemn tone, "Betting money is a little too boring. Let's bet on something bigger!"

He was stunned for about two seconds before he suddenly laughed. "Damn, are you two-faced? You seem to know how to play around. Hmm, this is interesting. Tell me, what do you want to play?"

"How about roulette?" I said, raising my eyebrows and narrowing my eyes at him.

The men in the room started to yell excitedly. Holden snapped, "You even know this? I've really underestimated you."

He then turned to the ladies who were standing to one side. "Did you guys hear that? Do as Mrs. Fuller says. Let's play something exciting."

Two of the ladies nodded and left the room. Soon, they returned with a large roulette and placed it on the table. Holden grabbed the dice that were on the roulette and raised his eyebrows. "How do you want to play?"

Looking at the vulgar numbers on the roulette, I said lightly, "We'll spin to number seven. If I lose, Ashton will give you Fuller Corporation's investment rights in Moranta. How about that?"

He narrowed his eyes as his originally cynical expression changed to something a little more solemn. He replied seriously, "What if I lose?"

I looked at him and said, "Stop working with Abe. Let him go back to Venria the same way he came here. What do you think?"

He looked at me as his pupils constricted. "I have indeed underestimated you!"

I kept silent, looking at him expressionlessly as I waited for his decision. His dark eyes swept across the roulette as his lips started to curl up. "I have to say that your condition is very interesting indeed. How fascinating!"

Then, he raised his hand and snapped his fingers as he kept his eyes on me. "Let's play. But since you're a woman, I can let you win one round."

I gave him a faint smile as I calmly replied, "It's alright. Let's just play a fair game."

As he walked over to one side of the table, he raised his eyebrows and said, "Let's start!"



When I made my way to the opposite side, he gestured politely for me to begin as he said, "Ladies first!"

Making myself comfortable, I pressed the button in my hand slightly, and the roulette began to spin. The pointer spun around the ten numbers endlessly, and as I predicted, it soon landed on the number seven.

I smiled and looked at him. "I guess I must be lucky."

He shrugged and replied calmly, "Does it look like I'm about to lose? I could say the same for myself!"

As he spoke, he threw the playing cards in his hands at the roulette's pointer. It spun rapidly again and soon began to slow down to stop on the number eight.

At that moment, the onlookers all let out a sigh as if they were regretting the outcome. However, Holden was not the slightest bit anxious. He simply looked at the roulette casually as if he did not care about the result. Then, two seconds later, the pointer stopped swinging and landed on the number seven. It was an unimaginable feat.

He looked at me, pretending to be full of pity. "It fell on seven. What a shame, you almost won!"

I pressed my lips together as I studied the roulette. Then, I suddenly realized that no matter what we bet on, the game would always come to a

tie in the end. After all, he was the owner of the casino, so it was a lot easier if he wanted to manipulate something.

Looks like he's definitely not willing to have a chat with me!

I put down the cards in my hand before I sat back down. Looking at him as I raised my eyebrows. "Mr. Taylor, do you not intend to have a chat with me?"

He leaped onto the table and looked at me carelessly. "Chat about what? About love?"

He narrowed his eyes at me and tutted, then continued, "I have to say, you're getting old, but you still look really charming. I heard that Ashton suffered a lot and had to run around everywhere just for you. Let me ask, is true love supposed to be like what the two of you are doing? You run while he chases you?"

I pressed my lips together in silence, ignoring the disdain and ridicule in his words.

Then, I said, "Looks like you're not that willing to talk to me."

He raised his eyebrows but did not deny it. He was basically silently acknowledging my words.

Since that was the case, I did not try to strike up a conversation anymore and simply sat there quietly while waiting for Ashton to return.

## **Chapter 868**

Just a few seconds later, I realized with a start that something was amiss. I leaped to my feet and dashed out of the private room. Meanwhile, Holden raced after me, but my rapid acceleration had already placed me beyond his reach.

The lobby looked just as it had when we'd first entered. Even the people lounging around lazily were the same. Out of the corner of my eye, however, I felt the combined gazes of those who had been playing poker at the side suddenly turning towards me.

Coincidence? Most probably not, I mused.

I surveyed the lobby. Turning around, I raised my voice and called towards Holden, who was just catching up, "Ashton had a great deal of faith in you. I was the one who had a bad feeling about you, so I kept an eye out. I didn't know whether the Moore family would be able to bankrupt you, but I'm pretty sure they can manage to humiliate you, at the very least."

Holden wrinkled his brow. With a glint in his eyes, he asked, "What do you mean by that?"

I scoffed, "Holden, you were the mastermind, so you should have thoroughly investigated everyone involved before proceeding with your plan. It was pure negligence on your part to underestimate me."

Holden bit his lip, his face growing darker. He then took a step forward, towered over me, and demanded, "Who are you?"

I shrugged, smiling faintly. "How shall I say this? Perhaps I should start from the beginning. My name is Scarlett. I was born in R Province, and my Grandma was the one who raised me. My parents searched for me for many years, and I only reunited with them recently. I only just found out that I'm Zachary and Cameron's daughter. They're giants in the commercial world, and I'm lucky to be their daughter. I have to admit that it's rather convenient for me to ride on their reputation sometimes."

Hearing that, Hunter's frown deepened. "Wasn't Larson the last name of the daughter that Zachary brought home? You..."

He trailed off uncertainly. I bestowed a kindly smile on him, then replied, "Sorry to disappoint you. There was a bit of a mix-up. Afterward, we decided not to make a fuss of things in the interest of my safety."

Holden narrowed his eyes, a hint of suspicion still lurking in his gaze. I met his eyes without flinching, then said evenly, "Holden, you seem rather

doubtful still. Why don't you bet on it then? Let's find out whether I'm speaking the truth."

Having thus issued the challenge, I immediately picked up my phone and dialed Zachary. The phone rang a few times before he picked up. "Hey, Letty, how're things?" Zachary inquired.

Holden's pupils constricted; there was still a glimmer of skepticism in his manner.

After a while, I continued in an innocent tone, "Dad, I'm still at the casino. Ashton isn't with me at the moment, but I'm with Holden."

Zachary answered pleasantly, "All right. Send my greetings to Holden."

I nodded, steadfastly gazing at Holden. "Sure!"

The phone had been on speaker mode, and Holden was naturally privy to the entire conversation. When he heard our conversation, he glanced at me, staggering slightly.

Ending the call, I then punched in another number. This time, the recipient answered the call almost instantly. "Miss, we're all prepared! We can make a move anytime."

I looked at Holden. At that moment, his face had grown thunderous. Through gritted teeth, he said, "Let's go and meet Ashton then."

At that, I smiled winningly at him, then instructed over the phone, “All right, wait out for a moment. If Ashton and I haven’t left this place within half an hour, don’t wait for me to call. Proceed immediately as we originally planned.”

My orders were readily received. “All right!”

After I’d hung up, Holden looked at me and begrudgingly admitted, “You’ve really planned everything out, I suppose.”

I flashed him a sunny smile. “I don’t have a choice. Besides, isn’t it better to nip things in the bud? We can’t go about placing our lives in the hands of strangers, can we?”

Holden snorted at my remark. He then brought me to another spot on the second floor, past multiple private rooms. At the last room in the back, Holden keyed in the password to unlock the door.

When the door slid open, I carefully assessed my surroundings. Nothing seemed particularly surprising as I had been in far more pressing situations than this.

This room was very much the same as any of the others. The typical furniture was present in its usual arrangement, with a poker table and surrounding sofas. The setting was made noteworthy by the fact that most of its occupants were people I knew.

I was mildly surprised to see Abe again. Oddly enough, he didn't appear out of place here at all.

Around the table, Ashton and Abe both held cards in their hand, seemingly in the midst of negotiating. When I suddenly appeared, all eyes were riveted on me.

Obviously, Ashton was taken aback. He put his cards face down on the table, then walked towards me. "Why did you come over?"

As he spoke, he shot a glance at Holden, who merely shrugged in return. "I had no say in this."

At the same time, Abe squinted at me, evidently bewildered. He didn't seem able to recall who I was. That wasn't shocking. However, considering the multiple women he'd encountered over the years, the women Abe had met probably numbered in their hundreds, even thousands. I was merely one among his many faceless victims. The only conceivable difference that set me apart from the rest was probably the fact that I'd managed to escape. I was lucky that he'd never gotten to torture me.

Abe's eyes flickered with recognition. However, as he saw Ashton and me standing side by side, Abe gazed at me, then intoned in a low voice, "Is it you?"

I smiled at him brightly. "Long time no see, Mr. Abe."

## Chapter 869

Abe glanced at Ashton, then sniggered.

“What were you planning to do, Holden? Why did you bring her in?” Abe asked menacingly.

Holden, however, turned to Ashton. “Mr. Fuller, it’s getting late. Mrs. Fuller looks a little tired. Perhaps you should be heading home to rest,” he suggested matter-of-factly.

“Holden Taylor, what exactly do you take me for?” Abe roared. With one swift motion, he furiously swept the cards off the table.

Holden, however, remained looking steadily in Ashton’s direction. “You’ll have to meet Dad tomorrow. You should get some rest tonight,” the man urged, a note of warning in his voice.

Indignant at having been ignored multiple times, Abe flew into a rage. He suddenly drew out a pistol and pointed it straight at Holden. “Taylor, let me ask you again, what do you take me for?” Abe bellowed.

The solid presence of the pistol immediately draped a dense cloak of tension over the room. Ashton silently shielded me with his body as he watched the situation unfold.



Holden, however, seemed accustomed to Abe's behavior. He glared defiantly at Abe, then said coolly, "Mr. Abe, if you fire that pistol, I'm afraid neither of us will be walking out of Gold Star Casino tonight."

Abe's face had turned purple. He had evidently dedicated his full strength towards restraining his anger.

After what seemed like an eternity, Abe slowly lowered the pistol. He looked at Ashton and suddenly laughed harshly. "Mr. Fuller, perhaps some other day then. Don't worry. There'll be plenty of opportunities for us to meet again. Off with you!"

Nonetheless, Ashton's gaze never wavered. He remained expressionless even as he nodded politely. "I'll be happy to meet for drinks. As for other activities, I still abide by the same principle that I won't do anything to hurt anyone else."

With that declaration, Ashton grabbed my hand and practically hauled me out of the private room. I was utterly bewildered by the entire event and had so many questions to ask. My curiosity died on my lips, however, as I saw the urgency with which Ashton dragged me through the corridors of the casino.

The first floor was bustling with its usual activity. Ashton weaved through the raucous crowd with me in tow until we finally arrived at the exit. Zachary's appointed personnel were already waiting for us there. With that, we hurriedly linked up with them and got into the car.

Ashton had just started the car when a crowd of people swarmed out, forming a barricade on the road before us.

They weren't there for us. A few burly men had thrown a man out of the casino and were now determinedly laying their fists and kicks into him.

Their chosen target was screaming for mercy, but his cries fell on deaf ears. Only when they'd observed that the man was half dead did his assailants consider their mission complete. They headed back inside, none the worse for the wear.

Ashton coldly watched as the man convulsed a few times as he lay on the ground. He struggled to get up but crumpled to the floor each time. At last, he lay flailing on the floor like a trampled earthworm.

I felt a sudden surge of sympathy for the man. "Ashton, can we help him?" I asked impulsively.

Ashton clenched his jaw and said nothing. I didn't press the matter either. It was a casino, after all. It was not the place for kindness or pity.

The man, however, lay squarely in our path. Unable to drive away, we could only sit in the car watching him.

After a while, the man seemed to have exhausted all of his strength. He lay unmoving on the ground like a corpse. Ashton's eyes narrowed. He then

stepped onto the accelerator as hard as he could. The sound of the engine revving was accompanied by the sudden lurching forward of the car. I was convinced that Ashton had made up his mind to run the man over where he lay.

The man, however, reacted to the firing of the car's engines as if he had been shot. He vehemently clawed his way up and sprawled onto the hood of our car. Blood still shone freshly on his face and from the corner of his mouth. The man then cracked a smile at Ashton and asked weakly, "Are you really going to stand by and let me die?"

Baffled, I turned to Ashton. Do they know each other? I wondered.

Despite that, Ashton continued looking straight ahead evenly.

The man laughed, but it came out as barely a wheeze. "You're both witnesses to the whole incident. Pity me and give me a ride to the hospital, won't you? My leg's broken, and I can't walk."

I found the man's utter nonchalance towards the danger he was in rather astounding.

Ashton, however, pressed his lips into a thin line. He barely spat out the command, "Get lost!"

Even so, the man shamelessly clung on. In fact, he'd almost clambered up onto the front of our car entirely. Lazily, he drawled, "If you aren't willing to

let me into your car, I'll continue lying here then. I wouldn't want to frighten that beautiful lady next to you, either."

Ashton was already seething at that moment. Without hesitation, he stepped on the accelerator once again. The car surged forward, and the man lost his balance, rolling off the hood then landed with a heavy thud on the floor. Ashton, however, made no move to stop the car. He looked as if he fully intended to run the man over.

Fortunately, the man reacted with what would be lightning speed in his condition, narrowly avoiding being crushed by our car.

The man's violent curses followed us as we drove off. "You're insane! If you really ran me over, you'd have killed me!"

Yet Ashton paid no heed to him. After a while, his cries of abuse faded in the distance.

I was quivering from the aftermath of that encounter. My entire back was drenched in cold sweat. I looked out the car window, focusing on the light of the street lamps flashing past. After I'd calmed down considerably, I turned back to look at Ashton. His face remained as grim as it had been the entire night. I was compelled to ask, "Just what was going on tonight?"

## Chapter 870

Ashton and Abe had clearly planned for their meeting in advance. I didn't know the contents of their discussion, but by entrusting me to Holden, Ashton must have been confident that Holden would ultimately fail Abe.

Ashton gave me a sideways glance. "Are you afraid?"

I shook my head, then nodded, conflicted. Upon seeing my confused expression, Ashton broke out into a delighted laugh, shattering the tension that had hung delicately over the car.

"Are you afraid or not?" he repeated, teasing.

I thought for a while before answering him solemnly, "A little of both, I guess. I'm afraid because I don't know anything. If anything happens to you, I don't know what to do. I'm not that afraid yet because I know that you always have a firm grasp of the situation. Besides, you're responsible. You will never put me in danger."

Ashton drove on, looking straight ahead. His gaze was unfathomable. "What if I tell you that everything's out of my hands now?"

I stiffened, but Ashton continued while glancing at me, "Scarlett, no matter what happens, you must ensure your own safety first. Forget about me. No matter the situation... just look out for yourself."

Ashton's sudden announcement startled me. What exactly does he mean by that? I wondered, disconcerted as I watched him intently. "Ashton, is there something that you're not telling me?"

Yet the man merely drove the rest of the way to the hotel in silence.

I had intended to continue questioning Ashton, but weary from the entire day's proceedings, I fell asleep the moment my head hit the pillow.

When I next opened my eyes, it was already morning. Ashton was already up and on the phone out on the balcony.

When he noticed that I was awake, Ashton hung up the phone, then called out to me, "We're heading over to the Taylor residence in a while. We'll leave once you're done washing up."

I nodded. After all, I had been expecting this ever since we'd arrived at Moranta.

On our way to the Taylor residence, Ashton filled me in on them. The Taylors were a distinguished family dating back generations. They'd made a fortune producing arms during the war, and Ashton's grandfather had remained in the country, enjoying relative peace. On the other hand, Archie, Holden's father, had instead been conscripted. Both George and Archie met through a group of mutual wartime comrades, one that also

included Channing. Having stood shoulder-to-shoulder in the face of death, the bond between this group of men remained unbroken even with the passage of time.

After the war, Archie had returned to Moranta to inherit his family business. The other Taylors had passed away due to illness or accident, leaving Archie the sole survivor.

Naturally, any contention that ensued in the Taylor household was in large part due to the struggle for a portion of the family's wealth.

As Ashton and I entered the sprawling villa that was the Taylor residence, the sight of elegant, antique structures greeted us. Resplendent with fastidiously pruned greenery, piping brooks, and flower-filled meadows, the Taylor residence was no mere mansion. It seemed more like a palace to my wonderstruck eyes.

We followed the maid into the living room, where quite a crowd was already gathered. I guessed that they must be members of the Taylor family. Archie was nowhere to be seen. From the ghastly looks on the faces of everyone present, Archie's condition did not seem optimistic.

"Mr. and Mrs. Fuller, Mr. Taylor's upstairs. May I invite you to follow me?" A voice courteously spoke from beside us. We turned to see the Taylor residence's housekeeper. He looked to be around fifty or sixty years of age and exuded a reassuring air of dependability.

Ashton and I followed him up to the second floor of the house. He led us outside a room thick with the smell of disinfectant and medicine. A doctor was hurrying around, scribbling notes in his pad while giving orders to the maid, probably instructions on how to care for the patient.

“Mr. and Mrs. Fuller, please,” the housekeeper said again, gesturing towards the open doorway of the bedroom.

The smell in the room was almost pungent. An old man lay on the bed connected to an IV drip that hung from a stand beside him. When Ashton and I entered, the housekeeper announced, “Mr. Taylor, Mr. Fuller is here.”

Upon hearing those words, Archie struggled to sit up. The maid dashed over to assist him. When he was comfortably resting against the bed frame, Archie focused his attention on us.

The extended period of sickness he'd endured had reduced Archie to skin and bone. His face was sunken and sallow and looked almost like a death mask.

Ashton and I drew closer to the side of his bed. Raising his voice slightly, Ashton said, enunciating, “Hello, Mr. Taylor. I'm Ashton. I'm sorry I'm only visiting you now as I've had pressing matters to deal with.”

Archie mustered a weak smile. He seemed breathless, and the maid carefully strapped an oxygen mask around him. After taking several slow breaths, she removed it. Archie then whispered, “I'm glad enough that you're here now.”



Later on, Ashton and Archie chatted, their conversation mainly revolving around the past. After a while, however, Archie shut his eyes, obviously fatigued.

The housekeeper, who had retreated to the side, sidled up to Ashton. “Mr. Fuller, I think Mr. Taylor needs some rest for now. May I invite you and Mrs. Fuller to head downstairs for a while? We’ve prepared some light bites for your refreshment.”

Ashton nodded. We then followed the housekeeper back downstairs.

Not a single soul had left in the interval that Ashton and I had been upstairs. As we descended the stairs, a woman marched towards the housekeeper, demanding anxiously, “Neil, how’s Father? Is he better? Did he ask for us?”